standing beings were imagined to exist of them-selves from eternity, there could not possibly be any reason given, why just so many of them should exist, and neither more nor less, there being indeed no reason why any at all should. But if it be supposed, that these many self-existent deities happened only to exist thus from eternity, and their existence, notwithstanding, was not necessary, but contingent; the consequence hereof will be, that they might as well happen again to cease to be, and so could not be incorruptible. Again, if any one imperfect being whatsoever could exist of itself from eternity, then all might as well do so, not only matter, but also the souls of men, and other animals; and, consequently, there could be no creation by any Deity, nor those supposed deities therefore deserve that name. Lastly, we might also add, that there could not be a multitude of intellectual beings self-existent, because it is a thing, which may be proved by reason, that all imperfect understanding beings or minds do partake of one perfect mind, and suppose also omnipotence or infinite power; were it not, that this is a consideration too remote from vulgar apprehension, and therefore not so fit to be urged in this place.

Again, as this opinion of many self-existent deities is irrational in itself, so is it likewise plainly repugnant to the phenomena of the world. In which, as Macrobius writes,* *omnia sunt connexa,* all things conspire together into one harmony, and are carried on peaceably and quietly, constantly and evenly, without any tumult or hurly-burly, confusion or disorder, or the least appear-

,[a] In Somn. Scip. lib. i. cap. xiv. p. 75.